

# **The Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ: Hope for Sinners - - Hope for Prisoners**

(Pastor Bob Hoekstra, IPM Director)

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (Matthew 1:18-23)*

The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ was unique. Jesus would be born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit. He would be *"God with us."* He would provide forgiveness of sins. His birth would fulfill hundreds of years of prophecies. **The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ would bring hope for sinners and hope for prisoners, too.**

## **Born of a Virgin**

During the engagement period of Joseph and Mary, she *"was found with child."* Yet, the child was not a result of sexual relations. Mary was a virgin. The child which was *"conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit."* This virgin-birth was prophesied more than 700 years before by the prophet Isaiah. *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son"* (see Isaiah 7:14).

## **God with Us**

One of the title names of this child would declare His deity: *"and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."* This child, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, would be God, the Son, coming to earth as a man.

## **Forgiveness of Sins**

The personal, given name of this child would be Jesus: *"you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."* His name would be related to His mission as Savior. *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

## **Hope for Sinners - - Hope for Prisoners**

The birth of the Lord Jesus brings such hope for sinners - - the guaranteed hope of forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Christ. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . . For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 3:23 and 6:23). We were all numbered among those who deserved an eternal death sentence on the basis of our sins against an eternal and holy God. Yet, through faith in the Savior, the Lord Jesus, we have found forgiveness and life eternal.

This is the same need and remedy that faces every prisoner in the world. As we send forth literature across America and into the nations overseas, Jesus is the hope that we present. We

proclaim the same hope that Paul preached inside the jail at Philippi: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”* (Acts 16:31).